

ATTITUDES OF AGRICULTURAL STUDENTS TOWARD CAREERS IN THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR

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The agriculture sector, as a linchpin of global food security and sustainable development, relies heavily on a skilled workforce. Recognizing the pivotal role of undergraduate agriculture students in shaping the future of agriculture, this research seeks to unravel the intricacies of their attitudes towards choosing a career in the agriculture sector. (Onu and Ikehi, 2013). By understanding the underlying factors influencing their career choices, educational institutions and policymakers can tailor strategies to attract and retain talent in this vital industry. (Eck and Torres, 1996). Agricultural progress serves as a crucial pillar for the economic advancement of any nation, with the agricultural sector being a focal point for overall economic growth. Contrary to historical perceptions, agriculture is no longer confined to uneducated farmers. In India, the agriculture and allied sectors stand as the primary source of livelihood, particularly in rural regions. (Zaki *et.al.*, 2018) In the early 1950s, agriculture contributed to half of India's GDP; however, this share dwindled to approximately 25% by 1995 and further diminished to a mere 13.9% by 2011. Evidently, the agricultural sector has witnessed a significant reduction in its labor force, especially among the youth, primarily males. This decline can be attributed to a lack of incentives for choosing agriculture as a career, prompting the youth to migrate from rural to urban areas in pursuit of white-collar employment opportunities. Regrettably, the youth harbor a pessimistic perception of agriculture as a viable career option, leading to a decline in interest in pursuing agricultural professions. Agriculture as a profession represents the backbone of human civilization, providing sustenance, raw materials, and economic stability. This multifaceted field involves various activities, ranging from cultivating crops and managing livestock to embracing cutting-edge technologies for sustainable practices. Professionals in agriculture contribute

significantly to global food security, economic development, and environmental stewardship. (Osborne *et.al.*, 2000). The problem under consideration pertains to the prevailing negative attitude of undergraduate agriculture students towards pursuing a career in the agriculture sector at G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Uttarakhand. Despite the crucial role agriculture plays in India economy, there is a noticeable decline in student interest in pursuing agricultural careers. This issue poses a significant threat to the future of the agriculture sector, as the youth, particularly undergraduate students, are crucial stakeholders for its sustainable development. The primary objective of this paper is to assess and comprehend the attitudes of undergraduate agriculture students towards their careers in the agriculture sector. This involves a detailed exploration of the factors influencing their career decisions, shedding light on their expectations, aspirations, and concerns. The research aims to contribute valuable insights that can inform educational practices, policy formulation, and industry initiatives to enhance the appeal of agriculture as a career choice.

1. To assess the socio-personal, communication and psychological characteristics of students.
2. To study the attitudes of undergraduate agriculture students towards their career in the agriculture sector.

● **Universe of the study:** G.B.Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Uttarakhand was selected as it has maximum number of agriculture undergraduate students.

● **Respondents:** The study involves undergraduate agriculture students from diverse backgrounds, ensuring a representative sample. Final year students will be selected purposively as they are or might be

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willing to start their professional carrier in various fields. Thus, total 56 respondents were selected.

- **Data Collection:** Data was gathered through online questionnaire.
- **Variables:** The research examines various variables, including gender, CGPA, place of residence, parents annual income, mass media exposure, self confidence, achievement motivation, attitudes, influencing factors, and career expectations.

Gender: It refers to the difference in male and female in terms of their role and status in society, values and attitudes. From the Table 1 it can be observed that there were maximum (66 %) of female and male (34.00%). This could be due to the reason that the university allows 60 % enrollment of female candidates and 40% to male candidates.

Place of residence: It refers to the original place of habitat of the respondent at the time of investigation. The results in the above Table 1 delineates that half (55.35%) of the students reside in urban areas, then 25.00 per cent student live in rural area and some (19.64%) live in semi urban areas. This could be due to the reason that students' parent might have been migrated to urban areas to provide their child a good quality of education and other facilities.

Medium of education: It refers to the language in which students have pursuid education. From the above Table 3, it can be seen that a maximum (84.00%) students have English as a medium of instruction followed by 16.00% Hindi.

Family type: It refers to group of two or more individuals residing together who are related by blood, marriage or adoption. An apprehension of the above Table 1

Table 1. Distribution of students according to general information (N=56)

S.No.	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
I	Male	19	34.00
II	Female	37	66.00
	Place of Residence		
I	Rural	14	25.00
II	Semi Urban	11	19.64
III	Urban	31	55.35
	Medium of Education		
I	Hindi	9	16.00
II	English	47	84.00
III	Any other	0	0
	Family Type		
I	Nuclear Family	44	78.57
II	Joint Family	12	21.43
III	Extended Family	0	0
	Family Size		
I	Small	6	10.71
II	Medium	46	82.14
III	Large	4	7.14
	'Parent's Annual Income'		
I	Low	14	25
II	Medium	21	37.5
III	High	21	37.5

reflects that 78.57 per cent of the students Nuclear family, whereas 21.43 per cent belong to joint and none belong to extended family type.

Family size: It refers to the total number of family member in a single family unit whether nuclear, joint or extended family. The Table 1 represents family size into three categories in accordance with mean value (4.76) and standard deviation (1.59). Greater majority (82.14%) of the students belonged to medium family size, whereas 10.71per cent belonged to small and 7.14 students belonged to large family sizes.

Parent's Annual Income: The total annual income of the students' family from all the sources was considered as Parent's annual income. From the above table it can be concluded that equal per cent of students *i.e.*, 37.5 per cent belonged to medium and high income

colleges followed by low category of Parent's annual income (25%).

From the above Table it can be comprehended that most (41.07%) of the students fathers were in government service, then 21.42 per cent in business, 14.28 per cent in private services, 14.28 per cent in farming sector and a few (5.35%) were working as labour (skilled/ unskilled). Whereas, majority (76.78%) of the mother of students were housewives and 12.5 per cent were in private services, 5.35 per cent were in government services, 3.57 per cent were in farming sector and few (1.78%) were working as labour.

Sources of information about the job: It refers to the various sources of information, *i.e.*, from where the respondents seek about his job/ employment. The data related to this can be observed in the Fig. 2.

Table 2. Distribution of students according to their 'Parent's Occupation'

(N=56)

S.No.	Parent's Occupation	Father		Mother	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Government service	23	41.07	3	5.35
2	Private service	8	14.28	7	12.5
3	Business	12	21.42	0	0
4	Labour	3	5.35	1	1.78
5	Farming	8	14.28	2	3.57
6	Caste occupation	0	0	0	0
7	Housewife/Husband	0	0	43	76.78

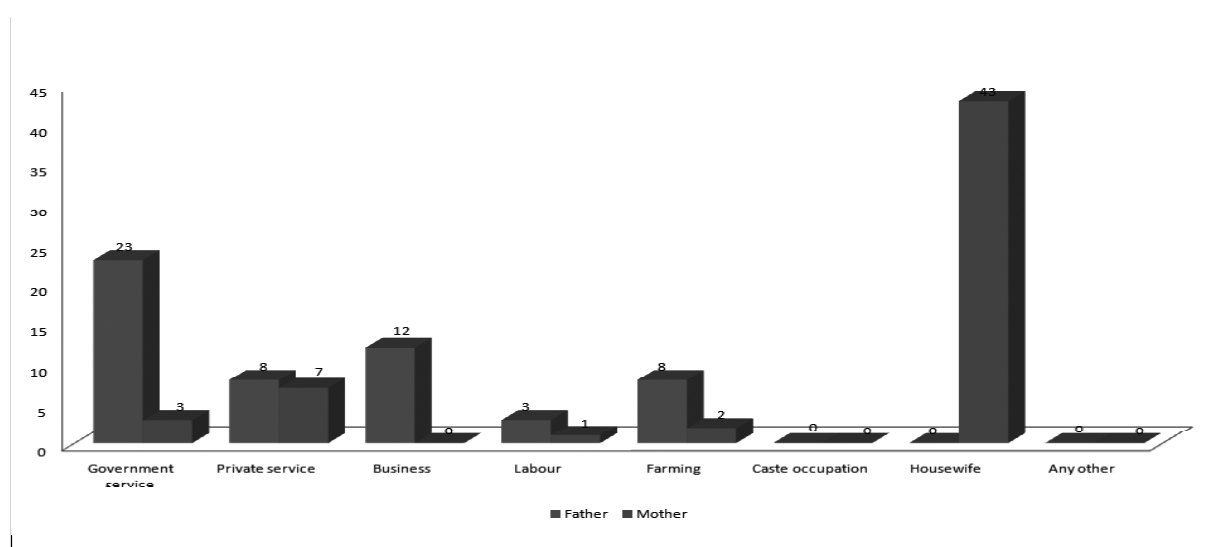


Fig.1: Distribution of students according to 'Parent's Occupation'

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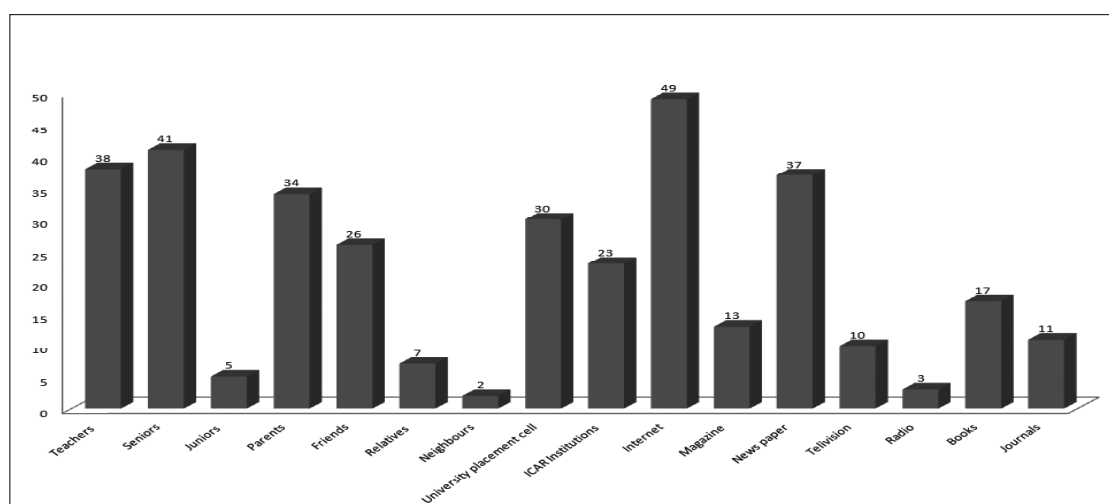


Fig.2: Distribution of students according to 'Sources of Information about the job' (N=56)

Table 3. Distribution of students according to their mass media exposure

S.No.	Mass Media Exposure	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	11	19.64
2	Medium	37	66.07
3	High	8	14.28

Table 4. Distribution of students according to achievement motivation (N=56)

S.No.	Family Size	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low	13	19.64
2	Medium	36	66.07
3	High	7	14.28

Mass Media Exposure: It refers to the exposures of the respondents to various mass media such as radio, television, reading newspaper, magazines, etc. The observations for the same can be seen in the Table 3.

From the above Table 3, it can be concluded that more than half (66.07%) of the students had medium mass media exposure, followed by low (19.64 per cent) and 14.28 per cent students had high mass media exposure.

Achievement motivation: It is an internal desire of a person to do something unique and excellent with minimum utilization of resources.

It can be observed from the Table 4 that maximum (66.07%) of the students has medium, 19.64 per cent students had low and 14.28 per cent students had high achievement motivation.

Career Aspiration: The term career aspiration often refers to profession/ occupation. Career aspiration represents an individuals orientation towards a particular professional or occupational goal. The Table 5. shows the data related to career aspiration.

Students' Attitude towards Career in Agriculture:

It refers to your feeling and preferences towards career in agriculture sector as a profession. The Table 5 shows the responses related to students' attitude towards career in agriculture.

The above Table 5 shows that maximum (75.00%) of the students had undecided attitude and rest in equal percentage (12.50 %) had negative and positive attitude towards career in agriculture. This could be due to the unawareness and lack of information for the jobs available after graduation, so that this type of attitude i.e. a kind of dilemma developed among the undergraduate students. Thus, they are still in undecided attitude situation for career in agriculture sector.

CONCLUSION

The research explores the attitude of undergraduate agriculture students at G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Uttarakhand, focusing on their attitude towards career in agriculture.

Table 5. Distribution of students according to 'career aspiration' (N=56)

S.No.	Career aspiration	Frequency	Percentage
1	To become a Teacher/Professor in an SAU	8	14.28
2	To become a Scientist in ICAR institute	16	28.57
3	To pursue higher studies (MSc./PhD.)	25	44.64
4	To pursue an MBA degree in Agribusiness Management or any other MBA degree	4	7.14
5	To secure administrative position in an Agriculture University	10	17.85
6	To secure administrative position in the State Department of Agriculture	17	30.36
7	To secure job in Central Government	33	58.93
8	To secure job in National Bank	29	51.76
9	To secure job in Private Banks	2	3.57
10	To secure job in Private Agriculture Company	4	7.14
11	To secure job in NGO	5	8.93
12	To start own Agri-business /Agri-clinic	3	5.36
13	To start own Consultancy in Agriculture	0	0
14	To become Farm Manager	1	1.78
15	To become Horticulture Inspector	5	8.93
16	Any other (Please specify)	0	0

Table 6. Distribution of students according to 'Students' Attitude towards Career in Agriculture' (N=56)

S.No.	Family Size	Frequency	Percentage
1	Negative	7	12.50
2	Undecided	42	75.00
3	Positive	7	12.50

Among the demographics analyzed, the maximum observation unit is female students, constituting 66.00%. The study also reveals that 55.35% of the students reside in urban areas, potentially due to migration for better education and facilities. In terms of the medium of education, 84.00% study in English, emphasizing the language's prominence in academic pursuits. Family dynamics, such as nuclear family structures (78.57%), and moderate family sizes (82.14%), are prevalent among the surveyed students. The occupation of students' fathers is predominantly in government services (41.07%), while mothers are primarily

housewives (76.78%). The annual income distribution indicates 37.5% in the medium category, pointing to a varied socio-economic background. Mass media exposure among students is mostly medium (66.07%), and achievement motivation is observed to be predominantly at a medium level (66.07%). Regarding attitudes towards a career in agriculture, a significant 75.00% of students remain undecided, indicating a critical need for information dissemination and career awareness initiatives. This research illuminates the multifaceted factors influencing the attitudes of undergraduate agriculture students and underscores the need for interventions to address the prevailing negative perceptions. The detailed examination of demographics and motivational aspects provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by these students. Initiatives promoting awareness about diverse career opportunities in agriculture are crucial for fostering a positive attitude and steering students towards a sector fundamental to the nation's economic progress.

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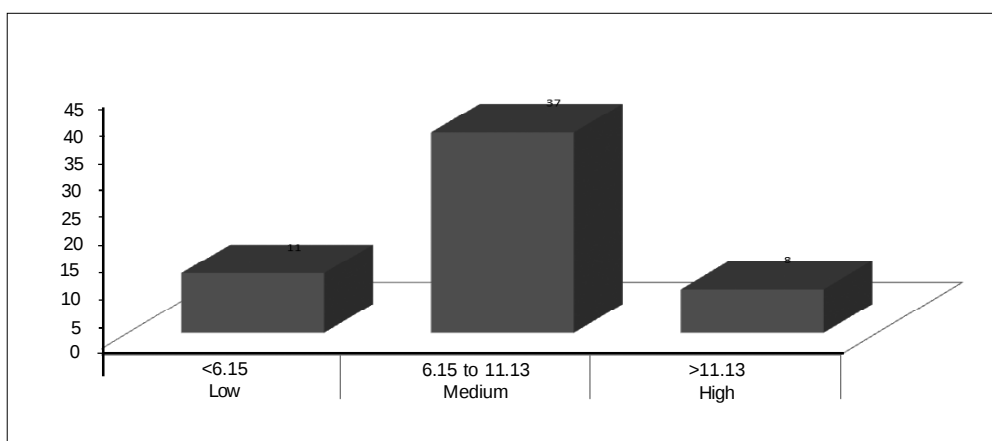


Fig.3: Distribution of students according to 'Mass Media Exposure' (N=56)

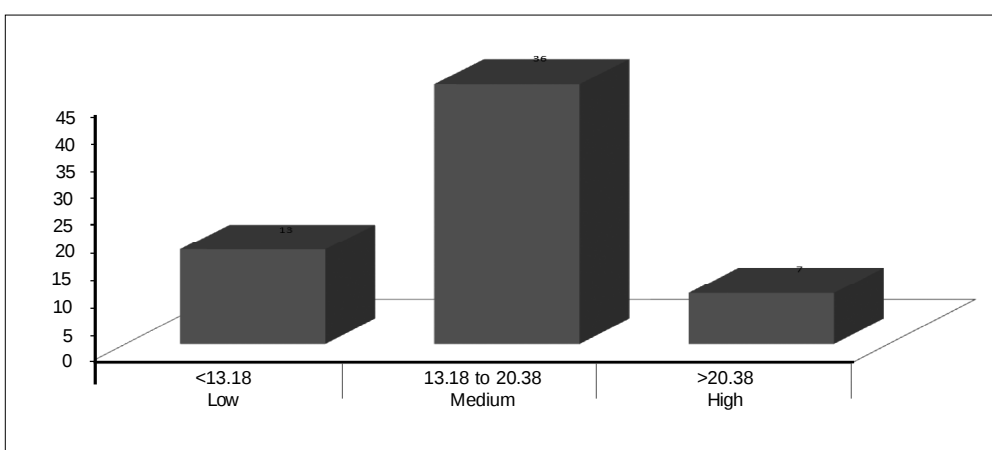


Fig.4: Distribution of students according to 'Achievement Motivation'

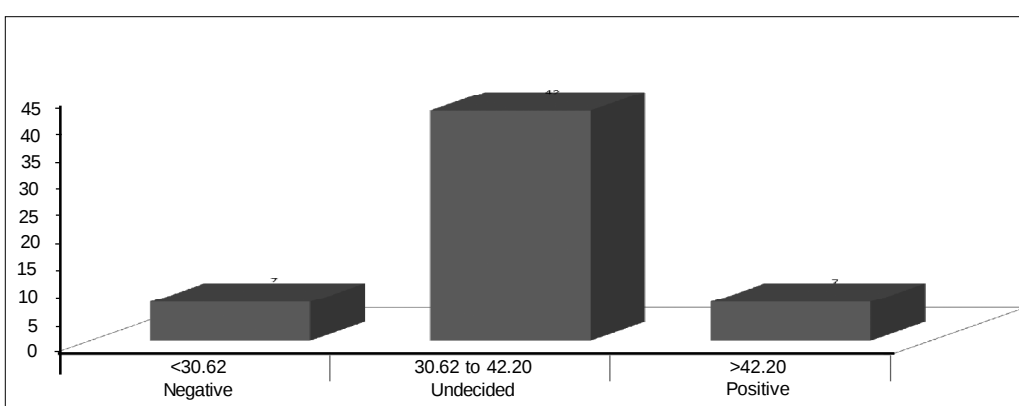


Fig.5: Distribution of students according to 'Students' Attitude towards Career in Agriculture'

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